

Accomplishments of the Michigan Surgeon General

Appointed in 2003 by Michigan Governor Jennifer M. Granholm, Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom is the first state-level surgeon general in the nation. She is Michigan's leading public health advocate, charged with addressing Michigan's health status and engaging constituencies and partners to improve it.

Childhood Lead Poisoning

Under Governor Granholm and the Surgeon General's leadership, we have made remarkable progress in the fight to eliminate the most critical environmental health problem that Michigan children face today.

In fact, more has been done in the last three years to impact childhood lead poisoning in Michigan than has been done in the previous twenty years.

The Surgeon General led the Lead Poisoning Task Force and Commission, which have resulted in new legislation aimed at helping families avoid living in houses that contain lead-based paint and action by local communities in the form of lead abatement, education and outreach.

And we now have tougher requirements for lead testing by health providers. In just one year, from 2004 to 2005, the number of Medicaid-eligible toddlers in Michigan who were tested for possible lead poisoning increased by more than 20%.

Unhealthy Lifestyles/Healthcare Costs

Unhealthy lifestyles – physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, and tobacco use – threaten the health of Michigan families and the fiscal strength of our state. The Governor recognized that immediate action was needed to curb the spiraling health care costs resulting from chronic disease and obesity and called on the Surgeon General to assess the state's health status and most critical areas of concern, identify solutions; and bring together the people of this state to implement those solutions.

The Surgeon General brought together approximately 400 stakeholders representing Michigan's business, healthcare, school, faith-based and community sectors in a unique public-private partnership never before done in the State of Michigan.

Through the *Michigan Steps Up* statewide healthy lifestyles campaign, the Surgeon General and her statewide partners are working to create a social movement to address physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, and tobacco use. Michigan Steps Up is not just about encouraging individuals to change their lifestyle, but also creating environmental and policy change in every Michigan community.

As a result of these efforts:

- Businesses throughout the state are making it easier for employees to be healthy by offering healthier choices in vending machines, providing incentives for employees to

participate in wellness programs, allowing employee to take walking breaks, and implementing smoke-free worksite policies.

- Schools are forming Coordinated School Health Teams, adding healthier food choices such as yogurt vending machines, adding before and after school physical activity programs, and building gardens to grow produce and educate students. More than 200 Michigan schools applied for the Surgeon General's Healthy School Environment Recognition Program, which recognizes schools that have taken important steps to create an environment and policies that support and encourage healthy lifestyles among students, staff, and teachers.
- Communities are creating biking infrastructure, installing street lights, adding crosswalks, and taking other steps to ensure that children have safe routes to school and adults have safe routes to work.
- Faith-based organizations are implementing healthy food policies and no-smoking policies, educating members about living a healthy lifestyle, hosting programs that increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables (such as the recent mini-market program in Detroit churches), encouraging physical activity, and more.
- Healthcare providers are encouraging patients to complete Health Risk Assessments through the Michigan Steps Up website and are promoting prevention in their practices. Many have implemented innovative prevention programs targeting healthy eating, physical activity, and tobacco cessation as a result of their participation in the campaign.
- More than 14,000 individuals have created a personal plan for better health through the Michigan Steps Up website and many are tracking their daily progress with an on-line journal.

Unintended Pregnancy

The Governor called on the Surgeon General to lead the State's efforts to ensure that every pregnancy in Michigan is an intended pregnancy.

Currently, about 40 percent of pregnancies in Michigan are unintended. Unintended pregnancy not only takes a toll on public health but also places an enormous financial burden on our state. In fact, if Michigan were to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by just 10 percent, it would save over \$27 million in Medicaid expenditures. We would also see significant reductions in infant mortality, child abuse and neglect.

The Surgeon General was recently elected to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Board of Directors and leads the State and Local Action Task Force. This role will create a critical link for the State of Michigan to identify new solutions and build on national efforts. Seventy percent of all teen pregnancies are unintended. In FY 2000, this represented nearly 11,000 unintended births.